REMARKS

A total of 30 claims remain in the present application. The foregoing amendments are presented in response to the Office Action mailed June 30, 2006, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

By way of the above-noted amendments, claim 35 has been amended to more distinctly define features of the present invention. In particular, claim 35 had bee amended to define that the team member profiles are stored by the persistent collaboration services suite remote from the team member's VTE client application, and further to define that communications information of the current member profile is forwarded to respective VTE clients of other team members, independently of whether or not the first team member is logged into the persistent collaboration services suite.

In preparing the above-noted amendments, careful attention was paid to ensure that no new subject matter has been introduced.

Referring now to the text of the Office Action:

* claims 2-8, 10-15, 19-21 and 23-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over the teaching of United States Patent No. 5,793,365 (Tang et al) in view of United States Patent No. 6,363,140 (Pinard).

The Examiners various claim rejections are believed to be traversed by the above-noted claim amendments, and further in view of the following discussion.

United States Patent No. 5,793,365 (Tang et al) teaches a system and methods which enable members of a workgroup to communicate through a digital network. Each member is provided with a user interface, which includes an icon for each of the other members of the workgroup. As described starting at col 12, line 9, "each worker's icon is associated with a data structure that maintains information about the worker, and further provides method to access the communication services provided by an operating system for the user's computer

and network installation, such as email, video-conferencing text dialog, and the like. In the preferred embodiment, this data structure is a person object 75"

According to Tang et al, a worker's person object 75 is stored on that worker's computer, and sent to other workers' computers in response to request. As such, the gallery engine 60 does not maintain person objects, but rather merely holds a listing of references to the respective person objects of various workers (See col. 12, lines 29-35). It follows, therefore, a first worker's person object 75 can only be sent to another worker if the first worker is currently logged into the gallery engine 60.

In direct contrast, the presently claimed invention requires that the member profiles are stored by the persistent collaboration services suite remotely from each team member's VTE client application. Furthermore, the persistent collaboration services suite is controlled to send communications information of a first team member's current profile to the VTE client of a second team member independently of whether or not the first team member is logged into the persistent collaboration services suite. Tang et al do not teah or fairly suggest this functionality. In fact, Tang et al teach directly away from the claimed invention be required that a worker's person object is stored locally on the worker's computer.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that United States Patent No. 5,793,365 (Tang et al) fails to teach or fairly suggest all of the features of the presently claimed invention. None of the other known prior art provides the missing teaching. More particularly, while Pinard teaches the use of a plurality of user profiles, Pinard does not teach or suggest that these profiles (or communications information contained within them) are sent to other parties under any circumstances. Rather, Pinard explicitly teaches that the profiles reside on a message server, with the current profile being used to control screening of incoming calls.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the presently claimed invention is clearly distinguishable over the teaching of the cited references, taken alone or in any combination. Thus it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, and early action in that respect is courteously solicited.

If any extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is required to obtain entry of this response, such extension is hereby respectfully requested. If there are any fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 which are not enclosed herewith, including any fees required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 19-5113.

Respectfully submitted,

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